



# News Release

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## **More than 129,000 kids ages 5 – 11 receive first dose of COVID-19 vaccine in less than a month**

*Pediatric vaccine will help protect children and slow disease spread this holiday season*

**OLYMPIA** – Across the state, more than 129,000 children ages 5 through 11 have received their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine since eligibility expanded to include younger kids Nov. 3. Vaccinating children is a crucial step forward as we work to stop the spread of COVID-19 and end the pandemic.

“While COVID-19 is often milder in children than adults, children can still get very sick and spread the disease to family and friends, which is an even bigger concern as people gather this holiday season,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health. “As a father, knowing our children are vaccinated helps me breathe a sigh of relief. I am confident they are now much safer and more protected than they were just a month ago.”

Getting children vaccinated against COVID-19 can help lower their risk of infection, reduce their chance of getting seriously ill, and decrease their chance of hospitalization and death. While current overall vaccination numbers are encouraging, there are areas across the state with lower vaccination rates that have increased risk. Pediatric vaccination rates range from nearly 26% in Puget Sound to less than 8% in the South Central and North Central regions.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of 13 children and teens age 18 and younger in Washington. Vaccination is especially important for children with chronic health conditions that increase the risk of severe disease. Data reviewed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found the pediatric vaccine to be safe and more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease.

The Pfizer pediatric vaccine is given in two doses at least 21 days apart, which means children vaccinated in early November are now eligible for their second dose. While one dose does offer some protection, completing the series boosts the vaccine's effectiveness. Kids are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they receive their second dose.

Everyone age 5 and older is currently eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. To find a vaccine location near you, visit [Vaccine Locator](#), [Vaccines.gov](#), or call the COVID-19 Information Hotline at 1-800-525-0127, then press #. Language assistance if available. For more information, visit [VaccinateWA.org/kids](#) or talk to your child's trusted health care provider.

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